

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, and 16-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, independent claims 1, 4 and 16 are amended. Support for the amendments can be found, for example, at Fig. 7 and related descriptions in the specification. No new matter is introduced.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiners Dicker and Haskins at the personal interview held March 9, 2009, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below, which constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kim (U.S. Patent No. 6,101,243) in view of Nakatani (U.S. Patent No. 5,253,079). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claims 1, 4 and 16, as amended, now recite that the predetermined series of processes originate from a plurality of multi-function devices and include at least a document capturing process, a document processing process, and a document distribution process. The claims also recite that each of the multi-function devices provide at least one of an input plug-in function, a processing plug-in function and an output plug-in function, and that the control device automates and routinizes the predetermined series of processes. As discussed during the March 9 interview, neither Kim nor Nakatani, either individually or in combination, disclose or suggest these features.

Kim discloses a facsimile communication system capable of transmitting document data over a network. Kim allegedly discloses that the communication system is capable of detecting transmission errors and then re-transmitting only un-transmitted pages of a document. However, Kim's performance of "steps" is not the same as the recited performance of processes because Kim's sequential execution does not suggest any "cooperation among the

processes," as recited by the claims. Nor does Kim's alleged sequential execution of steps suggest that processes originate from different multi-function devices.

Nakatani fails to cure the deficiencies of Kim. Nakatani simply discloses a compression/expansion device 36 that controls the reexecution of the decoding process when an error occurs. Nakatani does not disclose or suggest the coordination of multiple processes originating from multiple multi-function devices. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 4 and 16 recite patentable subject matter. Claims 2, 3, 5-7 and 17-19 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-7 and 16-19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination
Petition for Extension of Time

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